

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A license management apparatus for managing a license associated with a service that is provided from a service offer ~~means~~ service unit to ~~service-use means~~ a client, the license management apparatus comprising:

a license management ~~means for~~ section managing the license;

a license acquisition request receiving ~~means for~~ section receiving an acquisition request for the license from said service offer ~~means~~ service unit; and

a license sending ~~means for~~ section sending the license to said service offer ~~means~~ service unit in response to the acquisition request for the license so that the client is permitted to use the service.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a license counting ~~means for~~ section counting a value associated with the license.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said license counting ~~means~~ section counts the value when the license is acquired from an authentication ~~means~~ section that issues the license.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 2, wherein said license counting ~~means~~ section counts the value when the license is sent to said service offer ~~means~~ service unit in response to the acquisition request for the license.

Claim 5 (Original): The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the acquisition request for the license includes a license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said license management ~~means~~ section manages the license and the license identifier that identifies the license by relating to each other.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a license identifier acquisition request receiving ~~means for~~ section receiving an acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): The license management apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a license identifier sending ~~means for~~ section sending the license identifier to a requesting ~~means~~ section in response to the acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): A service offer apparatus comprising a service offer ~~means for~~ section unit providing a service to ~~service use means~~ a client, wherein said service offer ~~means~~ service unit comprises:

a license acquisition request sending ~~means for~~ section sending an acquisition request for the license associated with the service to a license managing ~~means for~~ section managing the license; and

a license receiving ~~means for~~ section receiving the license from said license management ~~means~~ section so that the client is permitted to use the service.

Claim 10 (Original): The service offer apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein the acquisition request for the license contains a license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): The service offer apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a license sending ~~means for~~ section sending the license acquired from said license management ~~means~~ section to said license management ~~means~~ section.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): A license management method for managing a license associated with a service that is provided from a service offer ~~means~~ service unit to ~~service use means~~ a client, the license management method comprising:

a license management step of managing the license;

a license acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license from said service offer ~~means~~ service unit; and

a license sending step of sending the license to said service offer ~~means~~ service unit in response to the acquisition request for the license so that the client is permitted to use the service.

Claim 13 (Original): The license management method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising a license counting step of counting a value associated with the license.

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): The license management method as claimed in claim 13, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is acquired from an authentication ~~means~~ section that issues the license.

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): The license management method as claimed in claim 13, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is sent to said service offer ~~means~~ service unit in response to the acquisition request for the license.

Claim 16 (Original): The license management method as claimed in claim 12, wherein the acquisition request for the license includes a license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 17 (Original): The license management method as claimed in claim 12, wherein, in said license management step, the license and the license identifier that identifies the license are managed by being related to each other.

Claim 18 (Original): The license management method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising a license identifier acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): The license management method as claimed in claim 12, further comprising a license identifier sending step of sending the license identifier to a requesting ~~means~~ section in response to the acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): A service offer method for providing a service from a service offer ~~means~~ service unit to ~~service use means~~ a client, comprising:

a license acquisition request sending step of sending an acquisition request for the license associated with the service to a license managing ~~means~~ section that manages the license; and

a license receiving step of receiving the license from said license management ~~means~~ section so that the client is permitted to use the service.

Claim 21 (Original): The service offer method as claimed in claim 20, wherein the acquisition request for the license contains a license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): The service offer method as claimed in claim 20, further comprising a license sending step of sending the license acquired from said license management ~~means~~ section to said license management ~~means~~ section.

Claim 23 (Currently Amended): A license management program for causing a computer to perform a license management method for managing a license associated with a service that is provided from a service offer ~~means~~ service unit to ~~service-use means~~ a client, the license management method comprising:

a license management step of managing the license;

a license acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license from said service offer ~~means~~ service unit; and

a license sending step of sending the license to said service offer ~~means~~ service unit in response to the acquisition request for the license so that the client is permitted to use the service.

Claim 24 (Original): The license management program as claimed in claim 23, wherein the license management method further comprises a license counting step of counting a value associated with the license.

Claim 25 (Currently Amended): The license management program as claimed in claim 24, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is acquired from an authentication ~~means~~ section that issues the license.

Claim 26 (Currently Amended): The license management program as claimed in claim 23, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is sent to said service offer ~~means~~ service unit in response to the acquisition request for the license.

Claim 27 (Currently Amended): The license management program as claimed in claim [[12]] 23, wherein the acquisition request for the license includes a license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 28 (Original): The license management program as claimed in claim 23, wherein, in said license management step, the license and the license identifier that identifies the license are managed by being related to each other.

Claim 29 (Original): The license management program as claimed in claim 23, wherein the license management method further comprises a license identifier acquisition

request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 30 (Currently Amended): The license management program as claimed in claim 23, wherein the license management program further comprises a license identifier sending step of sending the license identifier to a requesting ~~means~~ section in response to the acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 31 (Currently Amended): A service offer program for causing a computer to perform a service offer method for providing a service from a service offer ~~means~~ service unit to service-use ~~means~~ a client, comprising:

a license acquisition request sending step of sending an acquisition request for the license associated with the service to a license managing ~~means~~ section that manages the license; and

a license receiving step of receiving the license from said license management ~~means~~ section so that the client is permitted to use the service.

Claim 32 (Original): The service offer program as claimed in claim 31, wherein the acquisition request for the license contains a license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): The service offer program as claimed in claim 31, wherein the service offer method further comprises a license sending step of sending the license acquired from said license management ~~means~~ section to said license management ~~means~~ section.

Claim 34 (Currently Amended): A computer-readable recording medium storing a license management program for causing a computer to perform a license management method for managing a license associated with a service that is provided from service offer ~~means service unit~~ to service use ~~means a client~~, the license management method comprising:

- a license management step of managing the license;
- a license acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license from said service offer ~~means service unit~~; and
- a license sending step of sending the license to said service offer ~~means service unit~~ in response to the acquisition request for the license so that the client is permitted to use the service.

Claim 35 (Original): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein the license management method further comprises a license counting step of counting a value associated with the license.

Claim 36 (Currently Amended): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 35, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is acquired from an authentication means section that issues the license.

Claim 37 (Currently Amended): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein, in said license counting step, the value associated with the license is counted when the license is sent to said service offer ~~means service unit~~ in response to the acquisition request for the license.

Claim 38 (Original): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein the acquisition request for the license includes a license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 39 (Original): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein, in said license management step, the license and the license identifier that identifies the license are managed by being related to each other.

Claim 40 (Original): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein the license management method further comprises a license identifier acquisition request receiving step of receiving an acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 41 (Currently Amended): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 34, wherein the license management program further comprises a license identifier sending step of sending the license identifier to a requesting ~~means~~ section in response to the acquisition request for the license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 42 (Currently Amended): A computer-readable recording medium storing a service offer program for causing a computer to perform a service offer method for providing a service from a service offer ~~means~~ service unit to service-use ~~means~~ a client, comprising:

a license acquisition request sending step of sending an acquisition request for the license associated with the service to a license managing ~~means~~ section that manages the license; and

a license receiving step of receiving the license from said license management ~~means~~
section so that the client is permitted to use the service.

Claim 43 (Original): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 42, wherein the acquisition request for the license contains a license identifier that identifies the license.

Claim 44 (Currently Amended): The computer-readable recording medium as claimed in claim 42, wherein the service offer method further comprises a license sending step of sending the license acquired from said license management ~~means~~ section to said license management ~~means~~ section.